

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-5 (canceled)

1 Claim 6 (previously presented): A method of operating a communications device, the
2 method comprising:
3 accessing a voice message system;
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the
5 voice message system;
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;
7 storing the retrieved voice message in a memory device from which
8 the service subscriber can retrieve messages by telephone;
9 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital
10 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;
11 receiving a reply to said sending the digital audio file;
12 deleting the retrieved message from said voice message system in
13 response to receiving said reply; and
14 in response to receiving said reply, deleting the retrieved message
15 from the memory device.

1 Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of operating a communications device, the
2 method comprising:
3 accessing a voice message system;
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the
5 voice message system;
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;
7 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;

9 ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~
10 receiving an E-mail message including a telephone number and an
11 audio file; and
12 initiating a telephone call using said telephone number.

1 Claim 8 (previously presented): A method of operating a communications device, the
2 method comprising:
3 accessing a voice message system;
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the
5 voice message system;
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;
7 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;
9 receiving an E-mail message including a telephone number and an
10 audio file;
11 initiating a telephone call using said telephone number;
12 monitoring to detect a speech signal followed by a period of silence;
13 and
14 upon detecting said period of silence, playing the audio file.

1 Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of operating a communications device, the
2 method comprising:
3 accessing a first voice message system;
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the
5 first voice message system;
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;
7 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;
9 ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~

10 storing a first prompt message; and
11 determining from subscriber input when the first prompt message
12 should be loaded onto said first voice message system; and
13 determining from said subscriber input when the first prompt message
14 should be loaded onto a second voice message system.
15

1 Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 placing a call to said first voice message system; and
3 loading said answering first voice message system with the first
4 prompt message.

1 Claim 11 (currently amended): The method of claim 10, further comprising the step
2 of:
3 determining from subscriber input when a second prompt message
4 should be loaded onto said first voice message system.

1 Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 11, further comprising the step
2 of:
3 placing an additional call to said first voice message system; and
4 loading the second prompt message into said first voice message
5 system.

1 Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the step of determining from
2 subscriber input when the first prompt message should be loaded includes the step of:
3 accessing a prompt message schedule generated from subscriber input.

1 Claim 14 (original): A method of controlling a voice message system, comprising:

2 receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message retrieved
3 from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was reviewed;
4 in response to receiving said E-mail message, accessing said voice
5 message system; and
6 controlling said voice message system to delete said retrieved voice
7 message.

1 Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 14, wherein the step of accessing said
2 voice message system includes:
3 placing a telephone call to said voice message system over a telephone
4 network; and
5 sending a control signal to said voice message system over said
6 telephone network causing said retrieved voice message to be deleted from said voice
7 message system.

1 Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 15, wherein a voice message retrieval and
2 forwarding device is used to place said call and to send said control signal, the
3 method further comprising the step of:
4 in response to receiving said E-mail message, operating the voice
5 message retrieval and forwarding device to delete a copy of the retrieved voice
6 message from a storage device included in the voice message retrieval and forwarding
7 device.

1 Claim 17 (previously presented): A method of controlling a voice message system,
2 comprising:
3 receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message retrieved
4 from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was reviewed;

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5 operating a subscriber computer system to automatically generate said
6 E-mail message when a user of the subscriber computer system accesses an E-mail
7 message which includes said retrieved message as an attached audio file;
8 in response to receiving said automatically generated E-mail message,
9 accessing said voice message system by placing a telephone call to said voice
10 message system over a telephone network; and
11 sending a control signal to said voice message system over said
12 telephone network causing said retrieved voice message to be deleted from said voice
13 message system.

Claims 18-23 (previously canceled)

Claim 24 (canceled)

1 Claim 25 (original): A device for controlling a voice message system, comprising:
2 means for receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message
3 retrieved from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was
4 reviewed;
5 means for accessing said voice message system in response to
6 receiving said E-mail message; and
7 means for controlling said voice message system to delete said
8 retrieved voice message.

Claims 26-28 (previously canceled)

Claim 29-35 (canceled)